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Where I'm From

I am from coffee-black muck farms,
where evening mists hung low
and the air smelled of onions,
where ice mountains rose on the lake
and dared me to take a chance.

I am from Friday night fish,
fried clams, and chocolate ice cream,
under the stars at Uncle Rudy's.

I am from midnight mass
on Christmas Eve,
and roller skating
on the newly-paved lot
of Holy Family Church.

I am from Mary,
whose life ended
on a curvy road,
and Michael,
who gave me two-dollar bills
in exchange for a smile.

I am from a mother
who gave up on life,
and a father
who ran from it.

I am from the north
and now the south,
where the redbud and magnolia
house palavering jays,
and the neighbor's beagles
think my yard is theirs.